

CITY IMPROVEMENTS.

At a meeting of the Common Council on the 18th instant.

Mr. R. L. Jones (the chairman of the London-bridge Approaches Committee) brought up a report from that committee, "On the state of the funds connected with the approaches to London-bridge, and for authorizing the raising of the sum of 50,000*l.* for completing the same; and for the completion of the improvement by the removal of the west block of Bank-buildings, in the vicinity of the Royal Exchange; and said his object at present was to point out the necessity of immediately empowering the committee to direct the Controller to serve certain parties with notices with respect to premises which were required for the further improvement of the city of London, as the Act which gave the committee power would expire in August, and if immediate measures were not adopted, it would be necessary to apply to Parliament. (Hear, hear.) He then said that it was due to the committee to state, that, after a period of 33 years during which it had existed, and expended upwards of two millions of money in the erection of the bridge and the formation of its approaches, the present was the first time it had come to the Court to state any deficiency in its estimates. (Cheer.) He felt pride in asserting such a fact, the more so as he was able to show, he trusted to the satisfaction of the Court, that no blame was imputable to the committee. What were the facts of the case?

After the committee had finished the various streets which it had been entrusted with the power to form, and which constituted so noble a mass of improvements, it considered that a surplus would remain sufficient to carry out the great object of making a street from the Bank to the Post-office. The conduct of the Bank of England was, he regretted to say, in direct contrast to the liberality which there had been reason to expect from such a body, and which the Governor and Deputy-Governor several years ago had given the committee every ground for supposing would have been exercised. (Hear, hear.) It was natural to suppose that the promise then held out that improvements which in so many respects benefited that building would, to a certain extent, serve its patronage and assistance; but, instead of helping the corporation in promoting the grand design which the committee was labouring to carry out, every thing had been done by the establishment to which he alluded to show their indifference to the exertions which had been made. (Hear.) The committee had been called upon from all quarters of the city to extend to them the vast advantages which had been already completed. The law expenses in investments became greater than had been calculated upon, and the interest upon the sums required to complete the purchases which were indispensable in effecting the improvements was what the committee had never been subjected to upon former occasions. (Hear, hear.) The necessity for improvement became every day more and more apparent.

The largest item in the report related to the west block of Bank-buildings, the removal of which were the Governor and Company of the Bank of England, who had repudiated by their liberality the evidence of the former Governor and Deputy-Governor, Mr. Curtis and Sir J. Reid, before the House of Commons Committee. That committee pressed upon these gentlemen the necessity which existed for giving up that block of buildings, as no buildings were to be erected on the site, and the Bank would be itself thrown open to public view by its splendid improvement. Their answer was, that they could not think of recommending such a gift, as the Bank would be put to a very large expense in throwing open Bartholomew-lane and Threaple-street, but they would be liberal in their views with the corporation upon the subject. Now, the Bank had made no improvements in Bartholomew-lane or Threaple-street, and their liberal views amounted to an evasion of every thing like liberality. (Hear, hear.) He felt that the Court were determined to do justice to the labour, and instructions, and integrity of the committee. (Loud cheers from all parts of the Court.) (A general cry was then raised of "Move that this report be received.")

Sir J. Duke called the attention of the

chairman to the state of the eastern end of the Royal Exchange, and asked whether it was likely that the improvement which the public had frequently called for, in the throwing back of the houses in Freeman's-court, would be effected? (Hear.)

Mr. Jones said he regretted that the ground in the spot described was unfortunately out of the hands of the corporation. In fact, the ground was never in their hands. Morden College had a clause giving that institution a right of pre-emption, and it had been appropriated accordingly. It would be, indeed, a most important addition to the splendid improvement of the Royal Exchange; but the committee congratulated itself upon what it had already accomplished, and would not relax its exertion to gain every possible advantage. (Hear, hear.) He would venture to say that the ground at the eastern end of the building would be made a fine pathway 47 feet in width. (Hear, hear.)

Alderman Humphrey said, that every one in the city would be delighted to see the block of houses at the eastern end of the building removed, and he thought the committee might beneficially make the experiment of applying to the Commissioners for the Improvement of the Metropolis, who were about to visit upon the 1st of June, and were to meet on Wednesday next to sign their report, to represent the fact alluded to in the proper quarter. (Hear.) A sum of money was about to be raised by a tax of 6*d.* per ton upon coals, and, as the city would be very large contributors, they had a right to expect a share of the advantage. (Hear.)

The report was then received and unanimously agreed to, and ordered to be printed.

DESTRUCTION BY FIRE OF KING WILLIAM'S COLLEGE, ISLE OF MAN.

It is our painful duty, on the present occasion, to record the total destruction by fire of this beautiful, modern, and extensive edifice. The origin of the fire is as yet unknown, but it is ascertained to have broken out in the western wing, either in the class-rooms of the English department or in the boys' dining-room immediately below. Shortly after 2 o'clock the first alarm was given; but for many hours after this there was no fire-engine, ladder, or supply of water that could be used with any effect; and the flames, having thus unchecked progress, rapidly spread through the corridors and the entire of the vast building, including the class-rooms, the dwelling-house of the Rev. Mr. Dixon, the principal, the beautiful chapel with the great tower, which, with the exception of the apartments of the Rev. Mr. Cumming, the vice-principal, situated in the eastern wing, were totally destroyed. The first alarm was given by two boys who were sick of the measles, separated from the other boys, and sleeping immediately over the English class-rooms, who, having experienced a strong smell of fire, gave the alarm to the principal and vice-principal, who, with their families, servants, and about 50 boys boarding at the College, were aroused from their slumbers, although, we understand, some of the servants and children of the Rev. Mr. Dixon escaped with difficulty.

Excellent, the Lieutenant-Governor, the Clerk of the Rolls, the High Bailiff, and nearly all the respectable inhabitants of Castletown and the neighbourhood, were shortly on the spot; also the company of the 6th Fusiliers, presently stationed at Castletown, headed by their captain; and every thing that could be done was adopted; but in the absence of an engine for several hours—the essential requisite being wanted the devouring element spread with uncontrolled fury, and every thing that could be done was to secure as much of the furniture, books, and other articles as possible; but even here the want of ladders whereby an entrance might have been effected into the upper stories, without traversing the corridors of the building, was severely felt, and much valuable property has consequently been lost, that otherwise might have been saved. The greater part of the private library of the principal, a portion of the wines, and some articles of furniture in the front rooms, were saved by great exertions; but the very valuable library of the College, containing many works of great value, and a curious collection of Bibles, from the time of Coverdale, in

upwards of 50 different languages, many unique MSS. relating to Spanish ecclesiastical affairs, and the very valuable military models and plans, maps, mathematical and other instruments, many of which cannot be replaced without much labour and expense, belonging to Mr. Browne, the professor of English and Modern Literature, were completely destroyed.

The building, we understand, was insured in the Sun-office for 2,000*l.*, and Mr. Dixon's property for 2,000*l.*; but the loss to the building alone cannot be under 4,000*l.* Mr. Cumming, it appears, was uninsured. We have been given to understand, that the principal's policy is for his own property and "goods in trust," which, we suppose, will include the property of the servants, the boys; and that of the other masters in the class-rooms, in which case, if the sum were insufficient to cover the entire loss, some compensation would be awarded; the servants can especially ill afford to lose their all.

We cannot conclude these remarks without adverting to the obvious fact, that had there been an efficient fire-engine on the premises, or even in Castletown, the building could easily have been saved; instead of losing 4,000*l.* the Sun-office would probably not have lost 200*l.*; and at an expense of a few hundred pounds they might, as they ought even for their own interest, furnish an efficient engine to each of the four towns. This other draws large sums annually from this island, and we must say the paltry garden engine they have stationed in Douglas, and its slovenly and inefficient management, are any thing but creditable to an office of such respectability.

The inhabitants of the four towns ought to bestir themselves in the matter; for the practical example that in cases of fire they are absolutely without protection. Probably the other officers who do business in the island would contribute, and the inhabitants themselves might do something. What is now laid out in such an investment, to avoid being exposed to such serious calamities?

King William's College was a modern erection. The first stone was laid by the late Lieutenant-Governor Smith, on the 23rd of April, 1830, and it was opened in the summer of 1833. The building, a partly in the early English and partly in the Elizabethan style, forming a spacious and cruciform structure, 210 feet in length from east to west, and 135 feet from north to south; from the intersection rises the embattled tower, 115 feet high, strengthened with buttresses, and surmounted by an octagonal turret, intended for an observatory, having in each of its sides an elegant and lofty window, and crowned with a parapet. The edifice cost about 6,000*l.*, of which 2,000*l.* was from the accumulated fund from property granted by Bishop Barrow in 1663, for the education of young gentlemen for the service of the Manx Church. From subscriptions raised chiefly in the island, 2,000*l.* was obtained, and the remaining 2,000*l.* was supplied by mortgaging the funds. The original draught of the design was furnished by Messrs. Hanson and Welch, architects; but the execution of the work, including the alterations and additions and the design for the great tower—a beautiful specimen of masonry—were under the direction of Mr. W. Webb. The contractor was the late Mr. Fitzsimmons, who, it is said, lost 1,500*l.* by the contract. The property is vested in the hands of trustees, who are the Lieutenant-Governor, the Lord Bishop, the Clerk of the Rolls, the Archbishop, the Mayor, Christian, one Vice-Governor, and the Attorney-General. The present number of boarders, we learn, was with the principal 37, with the vice principal 11, and the entire number attending the seminary, besides day pupils, 110.—*Morning Herald.*

NAPHTHA AND THE FIRE OFFICES.—The Imperial and other fire offices have issued a notice to their agents that opothia or liquid gas lamps, recently introduced into manufactories and other premises, are attended with considerable hazard, and that in effecting all future insurances on such premises, a warranty must be given that these lamps are not used therein; and the agents are required to decline all insurances of premises lighted with them.—*Caroline Patriot.*